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De interpolitieke en internationale betrekkingen van Argos in de vijfde eeuw v. Chr., gezien tegen de achtergrond van de intra-politieke ontwikkelingen

Hendriks, Ignatius Hermanus Maria

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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

1982

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Hendriks, I. H. M. (1982). *De interpolitieke en internationale betrekkingen van Argos in de vijfde eeuw v. Chr., gezien tegen de achtergrond van de intra-politieke ontwikkelingen*. s.n.

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SUMMARY

In this dissertation the interpolitical and international relations of Argos in the fifth century B.C. have been examined against the background of the intra-political situation.

The main questions of the book concern Argive relations especially with Sparta and Athens and the factors which determined these relations, Argos' role and position in the escalating conflict between Sparta and Athens and the part Argos played on the stage of international politics, by which the relations with Persia are meant. Furthermore the influence of the intra-political developments in Argos on these relations has been studied. This implies that ample attention has been paid to the internal political situation in Argos and the relations between the most important states in the eastern Mediterranean.

In the first chapter Argive foreign relations in the archaic period and especially in the sixth century are dealt with. An attempt is made to establish a basis for an understanding of the developments in the fifth century. The relations between Argos and Sparta occupy the first half of the chapter. Although it is admitted that many accounts of warfare between Argos and Sparta in early Peloponnesian history probably have little historical value, it is shown that the theory of T. Kelly (*A History of Argos to 500 B.C.*, Minneapolis 1976), according to which Sparta and Argos could only have come to blows after the Spartan "subjugation" of Tegea, needs modification. Furthermore it is shown that the subjugation of Tegea and the war against Argos, fought circa 550, formed part of a greater scheme, devised by the Spartans, viz. to "seal off" the southern Peloponnese in order to guarantee internal security. This scheme was realised by the incorporation of the Thyreatis into Spartan territory.

Thus Sparta created a broad northern frontier, which stretched from the west coast of the Peloponnese to the east coast. It is suggested that many developments in the history of the Peloponnese in the fifth century can be explained by taking this geopolitical fact into account.

The second half of the first chapter deals with Argive relations with Sicyon, Aegina and Athens. It is maintained that Argos exercised some kind of control, the nature of which cannot be determined with certainty, over Sicyon and Aegina at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth century. Argive

relations with Athens were probably incidental. It appears to be impossible to establish the reliability of Aristotle's claim that close relations existed between Argos and Athens during the period of Pisistratid rule in Athens.

In the second, third and fourth chapters the "battle of Sepeia", in which Sparta won a bloody victory over Argos, forms the main theme. The second chapter is devoted to a methodological discussion of the sources concerning this battle and an attempt is made to separate the historically reliable information from legend and fiction. The conclusion is drawn that Herodotus' account is our sole reliable guide, although it must also be interpreted against the background of other information Herodotus provides. Some of the information in later sources, however, may contain a kernel of truth. A truce of seven days, a Spartan attack on Argos, an actual fight between Argive women, led by Telesilla, and the Spartans, the presence of the Spartan king Demaratus, the occupation by the latter of part of the town of Argos and the expulsion of Demaratus by the women, however, must in all probability be considered as later embellishments and products of fiction.

In the third chapter the date of the battle and its historical context are discussed at length. It is suggested that the date circa 520 is the product of an artificial reconstruction of early Argive-Spartan relations and that a date circa 494 is the most probable, although there is no explicit evidence to show that it is the correct date. Circa 494, however, appears to fit in with certain indications of an Argive renaissance round about 500, a victory of Argos over Corinth in the beginning of the fifth century and signs of unification at Sparta's northern frontier, viz. in Arcadia. The hints in ancient literature and other indications of a Messenian uprising or unrest among the Messenians are considered to fit in with these developments.

In the fourth chapter the consequences of the heavy losses suffered by the Argives (6,000 casualties according to the Argives themselves) are discussed. A constitutional change was the immediate result of the bloody defeat and led to a complete control of Argos by slaves. The difficulties of this view for an understanding of much of the developments and events after the battle of Sepeia lead to the postulate that the remnants of the Argive aristocracy were expelled from Argos by the slaves and found refuge probably somewhere in the Argolid. There they functioned as the representatives of the "true Argive state", strengthened their ranks by the admittance of *perioikoi*, and shortly before or in 481 regained control of Argos. They expelled the slaves who, in their turn, conquered Tiryns and expelled the Tirynthians, who found

a place of refuge in Mycene and elsewhere.

The effect of the admittance of *perioikoi* was in all probability some kind of democratization, which can be seen both at the time when the aristocrats remained in the *chora* (the differences of opinion concerning military help to the Aeginetan aristocrats) and after they had reconquered Argos: it is suggested that the aristocrats adopted a pro-Persian attitude and promised military help to the Persians, but that the *perioikoi* succeeded in thwarting this plan.

In the fifth chapter Argos' reappearance on the interpolitical scene after the Persian Wars is dealt with. The two objectives of Argive policy were recovering her former (?) leading position within the Argolid and strengthening her position with respect to Sparta. The first was at least partly achieved by synoecistic activities within the Argolid and the destruction of both Mycene and Tiryns, the second by establishing connections with Arcadia and Elis, the exact nature of which cannot be determined. The synoecisms of Elis, Mantinea and Tegea are best dated after the Persian Wars and are to be considered as forming part of a diplomatic offensive against Sparta, which must be seen against the background of the geopolitical situation as set out in the first chapter. Furthermore it is suggested that the battle at Tegea should be linked with the synoecism of Tegea and was the Spartans' military answer to the diplomatic offensive of the Argives, in which they probably were assisted by Athenian volunteers.

In scholarly literature Themistocles is often linked with the developments in the Peloponnese during his stay there. Although it is not denied that Themistocles played a role, it is stressed that his part should not be overestimated. The views of W.G. Forrest (*CQ* 10 (1960) 221-232) concerning this period of Peloponnesian history are discussed at length and for the greater part rejected. An alternative chronological reconstruction is offered.

Argive foreign policy from the middle of the sixties to shortly before the Peace of Nicias in 421 is the subject of the sixth and seventh chapters. In the sixth chapter it is suggested that the conclusion in 462/1 of a symmarchy between Argos and Athens, aimed against Sparta, was accompanied by a diplomatic offensive in the field of art, viz. tragedy, painting and sculpture. The plays of Aeschylus which belong to this period, the "Supplikes" and the "Oresteia", probably contain allusions to contemporary politics and present the view that Argos was entitled to the hegemony of the Peloponnese. In

sculpture the two statue-groups of the Seven against Thebes and the Epigoni are also to be connected with the symmarchy between Argos and Athens, while in painting one of the panels in the Stoa Poikile is to be linked with it. It is suggested that these works of art both form the link between and are the representations of situations in the mythical past and contemporary events in which Argos and Athens worked closely together.

One of these is the help, whether military or not, the Athenians gave the Argives in burying the Seven near Eleutheraeae-Oinoë in Attica after the battle of the army of the Seven against that of Thebes. Another is the battle at Oinoë in the Argolid in which the Argives with the assistance of Athenians won a victory over the Spartans. It is suggested that this battle actually took place, not, however, after the conclusion of the symmarchy between Athens and Argos, but before, viz. in the period of cooperation between the Argives and Athenians against Sparta in Arcadia. Finally it is suggested that the Thebans may very well be taken as an allegorical representation of the Spartans because of the ties of kinship between Sparta and Thebes in early Greek history.

The Athenian-Argive symmarchy, however, functioned only once on a military level, viz. at the battle of Tanagra in 458/7, although other occasions for military cooperation presented themselves. The reasons for the cooling of the relations between Athens and Argos were probably differences of opinion with regard to foreign policy. While Argos had expected to strengthen her position in the Peloponnese, Athenian interests lay elsewhere. Furthermore Athens and Argos probably had divergent opinions concerning the attitude towards Persia. As a result Argos and Sparta in 451/0 concluded a treaty which, although perhaps not *de iure*, anyway *de facto* meant the end of the symmarchy with Athens. In 446 Sparta and Athens also concluded a treaty, in which Argos was explicitly mentioned. Contrary to the opinion held in modern literature, this is not considered as a sign of Athenian-Spartan attempt to isolate Argos, but as an indication that Argos was a factor to be reckoned with in Greek politics.

In the seventh chapter it is suggested that Argos followed a foreign policy of her own, not in the Peloponnese, but on Crete. Argos established ties with Knossos and Tylissus and probably held some kind of sovereignty over both cities and possibly others as well. The beginning of these relations probably has to be dated after the conclusion of the symmarchy between Athens and Argos. Although we have very little actual information about the history of Argos

between circa 451 and 421, we have reasons to suppose that the splendid isolation which Argos cherished during thirty years made her a prosperous city in many respects.

Argos kept aloof from the conflict between Athens and Sparta in the Archedamian War but as a result of the expiry of the treaty with Sparta and in view of the general political situation in Greece in 422/1 it was forced to take a stand. In Argos itself two socio-political groups were opposing each other, the democratic "party" which favoured a rapprochement with Athens and a fresh attempt to gain the hegemony in the Peloponnese and the aristocrats who favoured close ties with Sparta. It is maintained that the intra-political situation in Argos, but also in Athens and Sparta, greatly influenced the interpolitical developments during the years 422-416, which are the subject of the eighth chapter.

Argos succeeded in attaining a hegemonical position by concluding treaties with Elis, Mantinea and Corinth, again an indication of the importance of geopolitics. The Spartan answer to this development was a diplomatic offensive which, despite some interesting achievements, finally resulted in a symmarchy between Elis, Mantinea and Athens. Argive claims to the leading position in the Peloponnese thus were strengthened and attempts were made to force Epidaurus into the alliance. Thereupon the Spartans reacted by sending a military expedition, which was however called off when it appeared that through the pro-Spartan party in Argos, a rapprochement between Sparta and Argos had become feasible, and an armistice meant to last four months was concluded. Intra-political disagreement both in Argos and in Sparta and the opposition of Alcibiades, however, prevented a treaty between Sparta and Argos from being concluded.

The battle of Mantinea following shortly afterwards ended with a Spartan victory. Both during the battle and after, the Spartans, however, in accordance with the pro-Spartan party at Argos, showed willingness to come to terms with the Argives. In fact a treaty between Sparta and Argos was concluded. This meant the end of Argive hegemonical aspirations. Despite the fact that this treaty soon broke down and Argos again concluded a treaty with Athens, Argos' position had been seriously weakened. The continual intra-political dissensions and struggles prevented her from playing a more important part on the interpolitical scene.